



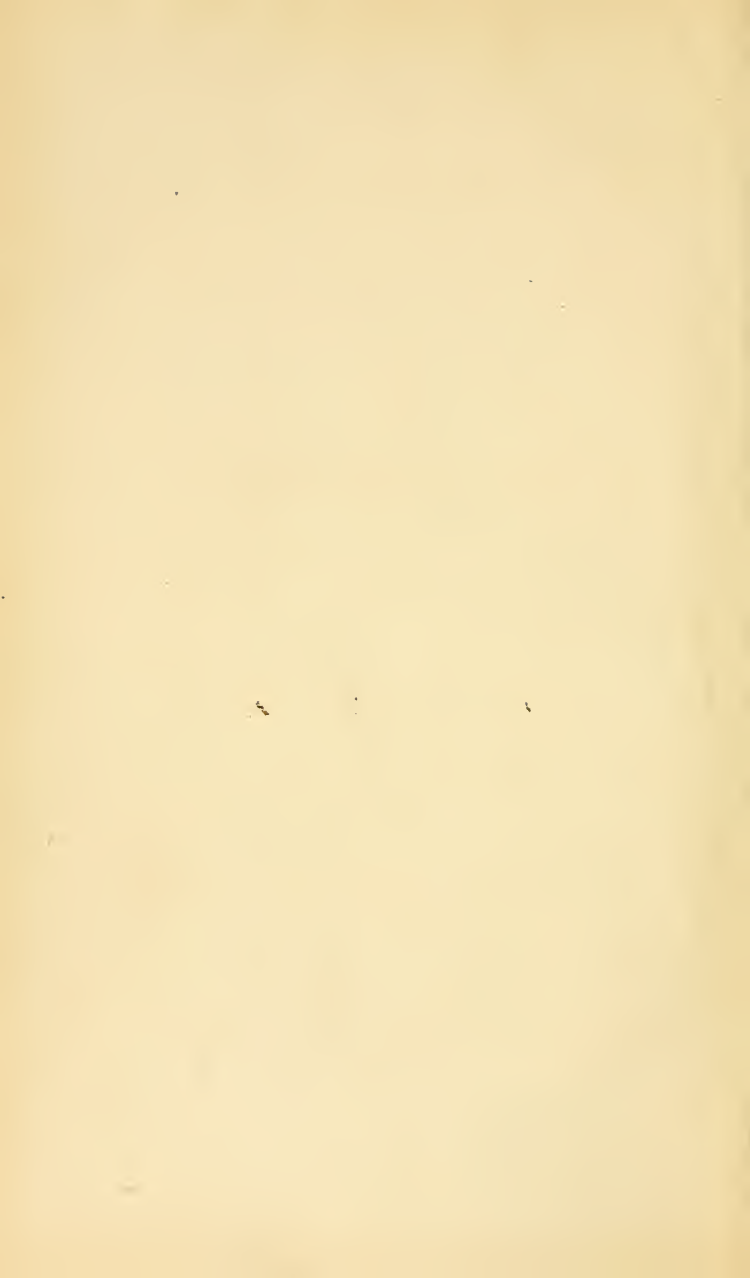
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

[SMITHSONIAN DEPOSIT.]

Chap. PS2182

Shelf .F4

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FELICITÀ:

A

Metrical Romance.

BY

ELIZABETH C. KINNEY.

4882.

NEW YORK:

JAMES S. DICKERSON, 697 BROADWAY.

1855.

PS 2182

.F4

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by

JAMES S. DICKERSON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of
New York.

E. O. Jenkins, Printer,

No. 26 FRANKFORT STREET.

NOTE.

SHOULD there be any doubt in the reader's mind as to the possibility, at so late a period, of such events as are portrayed in this poem, the Author has only to state, that its leading incidents are founded on fact.

PART I.

F E L I C I T À .

I .

THE convent bell now calls to vespers,
All the nuns together come ;
Ave Marias blend in whispers,
Solemn music fills the dome.
Where is Felicità — the maid
Whose pensive step is always lingering ?
Ah, there she comes, in white arrayed,
Abstractedly her missal fingering !
And now beside the rest she's kneeling—
Mantling tresses half concealing

The pure marble of that brow ;
Her white hands are clasped ; and now
Move those pale lips, soft and slow,
To the organ's mournful pealing,
And there comes a holy feeling
O'er her heart and senses stealing.
Lower, lower seems to bow—
Weighed by thought—that head ; and how,
Like a water-lily pending
O'er the stream, her neck is bending,
Till—as in the glassy river
Sees the lily all its grace—
Calm reflection back doth give her,
True to life, her moral face :
Still she keeps her prayer repeating—
Prayer's the music to her thought—
Still her inner glance is meeting,
From that faithful mirror brought,
Her own likeness, trace, for trace.

II.

Now the holy vespers cease ;
Twilight's curtain is descending—
Day's tumultuous rule is ending
In the gentler reign of peace :
To their cells the nuns repair,
Each to sleepy tasks of prayer ;
All to count their beads, save one,
Who gives thanks that she's alone ;
For she hath too little share
In what makes the others' care ;
Rather would she from afar
Hold communion with a star ;
Or, to be still more in tune,
Worship tranquilly the moon.
Why, oh why, then, is she there ?
Who's the maid Felicità ?

III.

Nature's been a generous mother
Unto this, her truest child ;
She, alas ! has here no other,
And her father never smiled
On the daughter he may claim—
Unworthy of a father's name.
He's a trafficker, who, bent
Ever on his sordid wishes,
Deems that gain is life's intent ;
While his heart by coins inclosed—
Thick as on the backs of fishes
Are the lapping scales disposed—
Hath no generous opening, where
Love may find an entrance there ;
Nor, within concealed, a trace
That Love ever there had place :
Dark his mien, with passion scarred ;
Thoughts of gain his brow contracting ;

Traits, once fair, by avarice marred,
 Gleams of cunning smiles refracting ;
Agile eyes, that seem averting
 Candor's open, daylight glance—
Oft their own regard inverting,
 Sending treacherous looks askance :
Such is he ! yet, when he wills it,
 Coil his baser passions up—
Takes his eye a serpent charm ;
Then his comrade, as he fills it,
 Grasps and drains his poisoned cup,
Never once suspecting harm :
 Woe to *her* on whom he levels
This, his lure ! she'll not escape
 Till o'er her lost peace he revels,
Or, her mind to his takes shape.

I V .

Thus, he once did subjugate—
 Luring from the parent-nest—

One, who made by him to languish,
Found—alas, it was too late!—
In her lingering, festering anguish,
That a viper stung her breast;
One, from whom death's struggle wrested
A frail dovelet, to be nested
With a vulture—and one day
In her turn become his prey.

V.

He, maliciously content
With his victim, fair to see,
Did her joyous name invent;
Child of France—that laughing clime—
Born, too, in a prosperous time,
Yet, whate'er her name might be,
Unfelicitous was she.

How his avarice did gloat
On her promised charms, when he
Placed her in this nunnery !
Timid child ! her slender throat
Choked with feeling there confined,
When she found herself consigned
To the cloister's dismal wall,
Whose dark frown did her appal.

VI.

Her unnourished heart had panted
For the breast of sympathy,
And she felt that what was granted
To her mates, not hers could be—
That love's fount for her was dried
When her poor young mother died.
Those who never felt heart-need—
Gnawing void, more keen than pain—

How, when famished natures plead,
Should they, in their selfish blindness,
Know to give the milk of kindness,
Which alone can love sustain ?
Felicità saw well that there
Her heart must pine, as everywhere ;
That in no common bosom dwelt
What could fill the void she felt :
Hers must be a life alone—
Hearing round her love's fond tone ;
She, the youngest, fairest fair,
Thro' the veil of sadness seen,
Still, despite her touching mien,
Only Pity's heart could share.

V I I .

So, among the nuns she moves,
One apart—unheeding them ;

None for her true feeling proves—

None her names, save to condemn :
They but find her cold—nor know
How to look that ice below ;
How to melt its surface through
With the penetrating dew
Which from one heart on another
Falls so warm and gratefully,
Soft'ning ice that needs must smother
Feeling's fount, if there it be :
They know not that the heart's tide
Inward turned, ne'er flows again,
If its springs be not supplied
By affection's dew and rain.

VIII.

An inner life she lives, for, even
Denied to nuns is converse sweet

With beauties peopling earth and heaven,
To yearning hearts companions meet.
At night when silence reigns within—
Dian above, and sadness round,
She breaks thro' law, nor feels it sin,
To seek the only opening found—
The window of her narrow cell,
And thence gaze up into the sky;
For *what* she asks not, nor could tell,
Save that *some* solace seems on high:
Or, when sleep idly loiters by,
And heavier than with slumber, are
With tears those lids, whose fringes lie
Like a Madonna's—while her prayer
Soars to God's Mother, because *hers* is there—
Some gentle spirit seemeth nigh,
And soft hands wipe the sluggish drops
Which on her oval cheek remain—
As on the peach's down, when stops
The shower, rest pearly drops of rain.

I X .

I said that Nature to her child
A generous mother was ; for she,
With queenly height and majesty,
In her hath blent all graces mild :
Her eyes are like a brimming lake
Which hue and light from heaven doth take ;
Her smile is Morning's ray serene
Ere sunlight makes too glad the scene ;
The mould of intellect her brow ;
Her lips were curved for Cupid's bow,
Tho' now, compress'd with thought, seem thin,
And white, save by the pearls within ;
An ebon mantle is her hair—
So long, that for a widow 'twere
A mourning veil, on earth to trail ;
So lustrous, that the stars might shine
Mirrored upon its surface fine,

And she, enwrapt by it, compare
With night's starred goddess in her veil ;
While classic features, coldly fair,
And marble paleness, make her seem
One of the few of whom we dream—
A beauty half divine !

X.

But beauty fades, and discreet Nature
Joined to such grace of form and feature,
Intrinsic majesty—a mind
Above all outer charms combined,
As far as over mental gifts
Rises her heart of truest kind :
Pre-formed to what o'er sense uplifts
The human soul, untaught, to her
Without a veil do truths appear,
Which knowledge scarcely maketh clear
To others, tho' interpreter.

The soul sometimes in native clearness
Sees the wide heaven of truth reflected
In its own bosom, with more nearness
Than through lore's telescope inspected :
As in the bosom of a river
Unnavigated, Heaven is seen
In truthful glory mirrored ever—
Sometimes without a cloud between ;
While in the navigated stream
But fragments of the sky appear,
And these oft troubled as a dream,
Because the waters are not clear.

X I .

Felicità's strong power to love,
As yet, is only latent force ;
For her father's brutal course
Nothing save disgust can move :

Filial ties were long ago
Severed from her tender heart,
And once broken, does she know
To replace them, now by art?
She's not Art's, but Nature's child—
Simple as she's undefiled ;
Kind and bland she needs must be—
Goodness is her being's law ;
But, tho' swayed by charity,
Her deep heart none ever saw.

XII.

Nature her contradictions has—
Her humors and her freaks :
Thus, of a sire who base-born was—
For lowest deeds of night ;
This radiant creature sprang—as breaks
From darkness foul the queen of light !

PART II.

F E L I C I T À .

I.

NATURE and Freedom ! ye, akin,
Emotions kindred do inspire ;
Ye touch the same true chord within—
Ye kindle the same hallowed fire !
In every bosom where is living
A heart that struggles to be free ;
In every noble spirit striving
To give its fellows liberty ;
There is a yearning for glad nature—
A love of prairies, rivers, wild-wood,

And of each sportive, bounding creature
That was a sympathy in childhood.
So inverse: who feels not by mountains
Springing from earth to reach the sky—
By cataracts—by upleaping fountains,
Which ever seek their source on high—
Who feels not freedom in his heart
Leap up to its Original,
And thence descending, life impart,
And blessings in its liberal fall?
But what so gives this sense of freedom—
This feeling, which in deeds must live,
As the sea-waves when wild winds speed them
Beyond all stretch that sight can give?
The boundless, fathomless, blue sea!
Who can feel this, and not love liberty?

I I.

So thought Felicità, when first
She left her sadly-dearest France;

When on her franchised vision burst
The deep, so vast and grand,
Beyond whose limitless expanse
She saw the promised land :
All calm its surface then, and free,
It was the mirror of her feeling—
What she had pined so long to be,
Seemed in the spirit of that sea,
And in its face revealing.

III.

She looked into her father's eye,
Almost expecting sympathy ;
She did not think that any soul
Could keep from bounding to the roll
Of those glad waves exultingly ;
Nor could a sordid aim exist
There, as she thought, in freedom's midst :

She looked, then, into that dark face,
Hoping to see some daylight trace—
Some free response to Nature's voice,
'That made her own true heart rejoice :
She looked—but, as the tiger's eye,

Which into night can fire-balls lance,
Turns every way unrestingly,
To 'scape clear Morning's sunny glance ;
So that unresting eye paternal
Shifted to hide its aims infernal
From the questioning look, so mild,
Of that unsuspecting child :
Something in those gray eyes, squinting,
Minded her of treachery's story ;
Something chilled her there—a hinting,
As of fate premonitory.

I V .

She had not asked why they were there,
Nor whither he designed to go ;

It was enough for her to share

The freedom she had longed to know.
When to the convent's walls he came,
And from *his* voice she heard her name,
A sudden cold presentiment

Had her warm blood a moment frozen ;
But when, thro' words of blandishment,

She learned that he had kindly chosen
To take her with him where he went,

An instant touched her virgin-lips
That furrowed brow—which dark intent

Did even then and there eclipse—
Tho' from the filial act she quick

Drew back instinctively, as one
Of an unfeigned repugnance sick,
And scarce believing what she'd done.

V.

At sea now, when his wily look

Did vaguely to her hopes reply,

Her frame again with terror shook—

Alas! she knew not why.

She saw too plain that such as he
Could with the heaven-lit, tranquil sea,
Have nothing of her sympathy ;

Nor could she henceforth feel its calm,
Nor drink its free air, that as balm
Into her faint heart had stolen,

Which to aching now was swollen

With a terror undefined,

While fresh tears her eyes did blind.

Then the Bible's old sea-tale

Rose, and made her cheek grow pale

At the sight of waves late cherished,

Lest in vengeance they should rise ;

For, if Jonah well-nigh perished

Fleeing from the angry skies,

Their *defier*, how much rather,

Should be swallowed when he flies—

Here the Jonah was her father !

VI.

Thus, shadows of a coming storm
Already on her spirit lay ;
And soon in distance rose the form
Of such a cloud as "old tars" say
"Makes sailors swear, and cowards pray !"
At first, not more than a hand's breadth
It seemed in size down the horizon ;
But, rising, spread, now black as death—
As some foul bird of night extends,
Pond'rous and wide the wings he flies on,
Dense, damp, and dismal as a fiend's !

VII.

Now wind and thunder from afar
Preluded Heaven's full orchestra ;

And now, hoarse shouts and big oaths dure
With that terrific bass-kept time ;
And now, all joined with awful chime
To swell the deafening overture !
The parted waves with yawning gaps
Rose, their white crests like ghosts in caps ;
The strong ship groaned, creaked, and grew
porous,
While fire, hail, rain, struck in their chorus.
And now, an interluding strain—
A symphony there was again,
And those affrighted, who were praying,
Thought it to them a soft voice saying,
“The wrath of God will soon pass by—
Be not afraid, for here am I!”
But now again the chorus thundered—
The fearing shook ; the trusting wondered :
The guilty paled—for courage strove—
Bit his lip purple, as to prove
That sea nor sky his fear could move :—

How vain to coax the craven nature
Of a corrupt and cringing creature !

VIII.

The trafficker approached his daughter
With a feigned tenderness for her ;
But, chasing him, th' avenging water
Made him his cowardice aver :
Before her firm, unshrinking knee
He fell involuntarily—
As if her innocence could bring
To shelter him its angel-wing—
And there, by that unflinching maid,
For the first time he—yes, *he* prayed !
She heard him—heard him *then* unmoved—
His dastardly design denounce,
And vow if Heaven him spared and proved,
That purpose to renounce :

'Twas not the oath that Jephthah took,
Which sacrificed his only daughter—
The first on whom his eyes did look
On coming back from Ammon's slaughter—
No: 'twas a vow he thought more brave—
If he escaped a watery grave,
His only cherished child to *save*:
To save from *what*, she dared not ask;
Tho', while he felt almost a saint—
—Heaven's ear and patience thus to task
With such remorse as fear did paint,
Till 'twas of penitence a feint—
She, who well knew 'twould only last
Until the storm was overpast,
Began to question in her mind
What was for her this threatened fate,
So dreadful, that it could create
A show of penitence in one
Who seemed to deeds already done,
In view of this new horror, blind.

IX.

For her, the storm had not a terror:

Those who believe that suffering hearts
Fear outward evils, are in error :

For moral anguish force imparts
To bear great burdens, and not feel them ;
To share great pains, and yet conceal them ;
To face great dangers, and not fear them ;
To see unmoved death's quicksands near them ;
To meet the monster, and not quiver ;
For, while he takes, he is a giver,
And bindeth only to deliver.
Felicità, by sorrow taught,
Of Heaven, as of her home, had thought :
Death was its iron gate, once entered,
She would be where her hopes were centered :
For, since she learned that she who bore her
Had entered by that gate before her,

It was to her the door of hope ;
And she wished daily it would ope,
 And let her pass from foul alarms—
From the dread enemy, her sire,
 Into a sainted mother's arms ;
This her belief and her desire :
 And so, on sea, 'mid tempests launched,
 —'Tho' she before had never seen
Nature put on her awful mien—
 She only felt herself advanced
Nearer the dark and frowning gate,
 This side of which she hoped no longer
In expectation vain to wait ;
 And thus, her courage grew the stronger.

X .

When from his knees her father rose,
 His compact with the heavens seemed sealed ;

Or that he thought so, we suppose,
 Since such a feeling he revealed :
The storm just then by chance abating,
 He, rogue-like, egotistical,
His vain lip-service overrating,
 Audacious grew, and mystical :
But, in proportion as the wind
 Subsided, and his terror calmed,
Fear wakened in his daughter's mind—
 By his late prayers and vows alarmed ;
He, judging her by his base self,
 Supposed she feared the storm and wreck,
And counting her as so much pelf,
 With freshened hope her charms to deck—
Began to speak courageous words,
To talk of peace which prayer affords ;
 But, when she lower bent her neck,
Unheeding what he said or did,
 He called her timorous and weak—

Told her the storm was past, and bid

Her look up, smile, and speak :—

Ah ! had she spoke what then she felt,

Rage had the heart rent, which no love could
melt.

PART III.

FELICITÀ.

I.

MORN on the fair shore Algerine !

Morning, that always, everywhere,
A living beauty is when seen

Breaking above the hill-tops clear—
That, after storms have passed away,
With double splendor ushers day.

Rising far east upon the sea,
The sun looked forth complacently,
And radiant smiled to view his heaven
Clear of the clouds, which gloomily
Hung o'er his pillow the last even :

The waves had yet a sobbing motion,
As if the great heart of the ocean—

Whose thundering beat far off was counted—
Had by some shock of late been swelled,
And could not all at once be quelled ;

Tho' when above th' horizon mounted
The sun, and tipped their crests with gold,
The scene was glorious to behold !

The coast of Algiers stretched out lay—
Its sands by foam washed, and the spray
Curling above, by sunlight kissed,
In distance like a golden mist :

Along the wave shot snowy sails,
And from the shore a landscape smiled
Of undulating slopes and vales,

And trees beside the roads defiled ;
Whilst there the city's open heart
Revealed its life-beat, and its art
In burnished dome, and gilded spire,
With the slant sunbeams all on fire :

And there, against the morning sky,
Bold hills their profiles did define,
In beauty's ever-curving line ;
And many a sea-fowl glided by
Graceful and noiseless, with no sign
Of fear that any foe was nigh.

II.

On that fair scene, which naught did mar,
Gazed, sadly-pleased, Felicità !
Could she herself but have forgot,
She might have fancied there indeed
“ The promised land ;” but her sad lot
Was all the prospect she could heed ;
For, well she knew on earth was not
The Canaan where she might be freed.
Yet, had the voyage been long and dreary,
And she, of hoping, fearing, weary,

Was glad that any shore awaited
Her, and her destiny ill-mated ;
For dark suspense she felt to be
More dread than dreadful certainty.

III.

Her father, since the storm, had shown
No more remorse ; but, rather grown
Moody and murky, as repenting
Old vows, and treacheries new inventing.
As neared the ship the coast, and rounded,
While land-cries on the ear resounded,
A smile malicious seemed to twinkle
Round his snake-eyes in either wrinkle,
And glide down to his mouth's dark corner—
Where it a settled leer remained,
Making him look the very scorner
Of men, disdainer, as disdained !

And when he first touched *terra firma*,
Turning to gaze out on the sea,
He something, with an oath, did murmur—
Something—one word was “childishly;”
The rest was lost in air and rumor.
Felicità, his least word catching,
As one her fate suspended watching,
Put his broke speech and looks together,
And questioned with her own self whether
He meant his late vows to dispute,
And his base purpose execute :
But, tho’ her very blood grew numb,
She, like a panting lamb, was dumb—
Hastening, it might be, to the slaughter
Of all most dear in maidenhood,
Of all her mother’s shade had taught her
Of what was virtuous and good.

I V .

'Twas market-day in old Algiers :
A broad and brazen mid-day sun
Looked with unveiled effrontery on
The thronged bazaars and groaning piers,
Where cunning, fraud, and shameless fun,
And other things, but fit for tears,
In his full face were done :
Ay, fit for tears of blushing shame—
For tears wrung out of woman's wrongs,
Of man's foul deeds, to which no name
In all crime's catalogue belongs !

V .

A motley crowd of Mussulmen—
Moors, Arabs, Turks—that noon was seen
Pressing on towards the grand bazaar ;

Some, with imperial gait and tone—
With broidered robe, and sparkling zone,
And jewelled scimitar;
Some, with the stern and sullen air
Of such, as thro' the silent "*must*"—
Do sway their slaves, if black, or fair—
If slaves to drudgery, or to lust.

VI.

But why thronged they that grand bazaar—
What there was the contested prize?
What—but the maid FELICITA!
Who stood in that round, mocking sun—
In face of that lascivious gaze,
With shrinking form and downcast eyes;
Nor could she its bold, searching blaze—
Even *she*—the Heaven-eyed creature—shun!

Yes : there she stood ! her modesty,
Which now served only to amaze,
Crushed down, and crushing all that she
Had cherished, as the pride which stays
The soul in its integrity :
There, lovelier for that shrinking grace,
She stood, exposed her virgin-charms ;
In that unnatural father's face,
A prize for the chief bidder's arms !
And she, an eighteen-summer maid—
So newly from youth's bud unfolded ;
Fresh with life's morning dew, and moulded
As gracefully as nymph or naiad !

VII.

Oh ! where wert *thou*, maternal shade ?
Why, of a crime so horrible,
Wert thou not her avenger made ?

Why didst thou not make visible
Thy angel-face in radiance armed
With all the majesty, the might,
Of virtue's truth, and woman's right,
Which could have wrong to silence charmed?
Or, with the force of incensed love,
Which, like the bolts of angry Jove,
Would have Barbarity disarmed!

VIII.

When those brute-men such beauty saw
As eyes profane might fear to see,
A silence fell there, as of awe
Before an ancient deity:
Then a faint murmur rose and swelled,
And then into a circle rounded;
And now, with breaths of hundreds filled,
Outburst and thro' the air resounded!

'Twas the spontaneous applause
Of sensual minds to Beauty's mould :
How could they know it did infold
A fairer soul? Mahomet's laws
Of woman's spirit never told.
There was a momentary pause ;—
And then the turban'd auctioneer
Sent forth his cry, as cold, as clear ;
But, ere commenced the strife of bids,
Sudden the victim raised her lids ;
And from those eyes, late moist with shame,
—But now burnt dry by scorn—a flame
Of incensed pride flashed on that throng—
Wrath triumphing o'er modesty—
Shame yielding to the sense of wrong,
In woman terrible to see !
Had they been aught save Mussulmen,
They would have fallen back—as when
Christ's look of scorn—his “ I AM HE ! ”

Fell, blasting the effrontery
Of those whose sacrilegious eyes
Sought in divinity a prize !

I X .

But, she was woman—not a God—
Her triumph but a lightning-flash ;
And quick again she crouching stood,
Like a poor slave beneath the lash ;
Or, drooping—as the weeping willow
That bent o'er her dead mother's pillow—
Over the grave of woman's pride ;
Longing to lie herself beside
That suffering once, now resting mother—
Oh, could they but as one have died,
And be calm sleeping there together !

X .

Hark ! what was that ? the final cry—

Nine thousand piastres cast the die !

The deed of infamy is done—

In blood of angels' hearts is signed ;

She sees—she hears, and then grows blind—

Turned by Doom's visage into stone !

The princely Arab, Ackmet-bey,

Bids his slaves bear the prize away.

PART IV.

FELICITA.

I.

EVENING's deep blue, bespangled dome
Bent over Algiers, as serene,
As if for vice there were no home
In all that shadowed scene :
The moon too, rose—the virgin moon—
That once for an intrusive look
On her divinest charms, so soon
The vengeance of a goddess took !
She rose, and smiled as calmly down
On silvered mosque and minaret,
As if she ne'er a wrong had known,
Or all her vengeance did forget ;

Or, as if in her modest sight

No other virgins were outraged—

As if there, on that very night,

No maiden, for her saintly right,

Had war with tyrants waged.

II.

There, in his grotesque Arab home,

Cushioned luxuriously, lay

Smoking and sipping, Ackmet-bey !

A nod made quickly go and come

The dark-eyed slaves, which all the day

Beside his divan waited ;—some,

On mystic instruments to play—

Now, lulling to voluptuous dreams,

And now, awaking him with gleams

Of jewelled arms, and tinkling feet,

That kept the music's quick-time beat ;

While starry eyes, thro' blackest night,
Flashed on their proud lord love and light.

III.

Among those slaves there was a youth
Who had from France a child been brought—
Stolen, to sell in Greece, forsooth,
For there by Ackmet was he bought:
The price paid for him he well earned,
As from his lips his master learned
To speak his cherished mother-tongue,
When he so gentle was, and young,
As all affections to invite,
And thus become the favorite:
A handsome youth he was, and ruly;
But, tho' by Ackmet loved, or petted—
For *love* not such as he know truly—
Fondness from him but only fretted

The yearning heart of Jules, oft swelling
With home's sweet memories indwelling ;
Tho'—French-like—a good actor, he
Could sparkle with vivacity,
And put his lord—the cunning elf!—
In humor always with himself.
Just turned of twenty, now a man,
The thought of freedom often ran
Like a glad rill along his brain,
While grew more irksome slavery's chain.

I V .

That night beside his lord he stood
Without his wonted mask of glee—
Desponding both in mien and mood,
He leaned his light weight gracefully
On his white hand, and seemed to brood
Over some dear thought pensively:

The dancing-girls around him flitting,
By chance, or mischief, often hitting
His garment's border, made him start,
And from his revery apart,
Look up and watch the wary measure,
While thinking of all things, save pleasure.

V.

“Jules!”—’twas his master’s voice that spake,
Making his stray thoughts sudden quake;
While something of a guilty feeling
Seemed in his startled air revealing——
“Jules, bid this ill-timed music cease—
To-night I want but thee—and peace!”
No sooner was it said, than done—
As quick as bright thoughts pass, were gone
Those flashing eyes;—Jules stayed alone:
The costliest *chiboque* now he brings,
And coffee in such tiny things

As seem carved out for fairy's lip,
Or, shell-cups from which naiads sip ;
Sherbet, in crystal as exquisite,
Beside the divan now he places,
And, where the drapery interlaces,
Waits by his lord——*he* waits a visit !

V I.

Now, was a rustling in the air—
A gorgeous curtain parting there,
Revealed a scene whose light and shade
A fair girl and a dark slave made ;
The Moor drew back—the brightness neared,
And there FELICITA appeared !
There—in a beauty that did awe them
With its true majesty divine ;
In the rich costume of the harem—
Tho' not so clear those pearls did shine,
As the white neck and arms that bare them :

Her soul-lit eyes, no more bent downward,
Their veiling fringes were upturned,
Letting a stream of prayer rise sunward
From the live thought which inward burned.

VII.

She came, advancing towards the Arab,
With the God-aided step and mien
Of Moses—when the rock of Horeb,
To others dry, by him was seen
With its deep fount of living waters,
Which made the wilderness soon green,
Refreshing Israel's sons and daughters:—
The God of Moses was her leader—
Truth her deep well, and Right her pleader;
Nor feared she to advance—a rock
She in that moral desert saw,
Which might be cleft by feeling's shock—
By the rod-touch of human law,

And send forth pity's crystal river,
New life and liberty to give her.

VIII.

Firm stepped she forward: and then, kneeling
Before her *owner*—not her *master*;
Nor yet his visible presence feeling—
—'Tho', thinking so, his heart beat faster—
But the INVISIBLE, concealing
From his, while to her mind revealing;
She folded on her spotless bosom
Her two white hands—which there did seem
Like a white lily's folded blossom
On the clear bosom of a stream:
Of words, at first, she said no other—
Tho' her lips paled and moved—save "mother!"
But soon, as if that word refreshed her,
She to the Arab calm addressed her.

IX.

“Behold an orphan!” said she, “Alla
Calls on his Ackmet for the valor

Whose armor is the orphan’s prayer—
Whose triumph is the orphan’s blessing;
Which makes Defencelessness its care—
The recompense, at last possessing,
Mahomet’s heaven to share.”

An eye here at the Arab glancing,
She changed her language, thus advancing:

“We, of the Christian faith, have angels
Which ever our avengers are;

We read in the beloved Evangels
That they are round us everywhere;

They speak to us unuttered words—
They know to show us unseen things,

And some are armed with flaming swords
That gleam out from their shining wings:

They say, for us, to all, 'Beware!
Touch not these little ones; nor dare,
With woman, to be less than brave;
But use the force which Alla gave,
Her virtue to protect and save.' "

X.

Alas, the maiden vain words said!
The depth of her true heart of woman
Her measure she for others made;
She little knew the great heart human—
Shallow, as wide; save here and there
A deep spot, as a fountain, where
Wells up true feeling, holy love,
Fed from its purest source above:
Her breast was one of these deep places,
But she its feeling here had wasted;
For, in the Arab's eye no traces

Of sentiment or truth replied,
Or any thing that showed he tasted
The menaces to him applied :
He was not that responding rock
She hoped with truth's divining-rod
To touch, as did the man of God
The desert-stone—he felt no shock,
And woman's eloquence did mock :
But, she had probed another heart,
Which hid beneath its rocky cover
A fount, that only woman's art—
Her touch of feeling could discover.

X I.

“ Rise ! ” said the Arab—“ wherefore kneeling
To me, as if I were a god ;
Or fiend, devoid of human feeling,
Because these slaves obey my nod ?

Know, that I'm neither god, nor demon—

This heart Arabian, is human !

Tho' thou hast charms which gods might steal,

Think not that I'm a Grecian Jove ;

For beauty, if no less I feel,

I would not claim it without love :

So, calm thee ! and in me behold

The lover, not the tyrant cold ;

One, who from thee but love demands—

Love, which makes freedom slavery's bands !

Thou of my harem shalt become

The light and life—'tis hence thy home ;

And woe to any one who dares

To frown on her whose beauty shares—

Whose wishes, whose caprices, sway

The heart and wealth of Ackmet-bey !”

XII.

The maid at his behest had risen,
And stood up to her queenly height—
Baring her swelling bosom's white,
Which those clasped hands did late imprison,
Unto the lancing speech he made,
More fearful than his sabre's blade;
And when he finished, still she stood,
As if its steel-point froze her blood,
Instead of bringing out the show
Of hot emotions' sanguine flow.

XIII.

“Why stand'st thou there? come hither, maid!”
—The half-confounded Ackmet said—
“Tell me what I shall do for thee,
And tho' its price my best steed be,

I'll sacrifice to thy desire
His pure Arabian blood of fire :
If thou canst smile, let me once see
That smile, as sunlight, fall on me :
Compose thee ! here's thine own divan,
Its silk, of Persian texture, scan ;
Sweetmeats and coffee's fragrant grain
Await, in antique porcelain,
The kisses of thy sweeter lips—
Thy glance, which stars do not eclipse !
And here's my French page, now thine own,
 Who'll sing to thee, and at thy choice
Thy favorite native airs alone ;
 While damsels aid his silvery voice ;
Or lightly touch, his notes between,
The magic, mellow, mandoline."

XIV.

Jules, whose suspended heart, not ear,
Hung on his master's every word;
Writhed, when his own name he did hear,
And meet her glance—to him a fear!—
As if at once a two-edged sword
Had doubly pierced his throbbing breast,
Where his hot hand he firmer prest—
Seeming the life-blood there to stay,
Which would his manhood bear away.

XV.

Eyes are of eyes interpreters!
Thro' that unmeaning glance of hers,
Had clearly read Felicità
Signs, which as words to woman are—
To others mystic characters.

From Jules her eye turned, mutely pleading,
To Ackmet——tears therein did glisten,
Which, for her faint words interceding,
Seemed to say, “’Tis my last hope—listen !”

XVI.

And thus she spake, in accents meek :
“Ackmet is strong, the maiden weak ;
Ackmet is master, she his slave ;
He bids her ask of him a gift—
He who is generous, is brave ;
So, she will dare her eyes uplift,
And ask that he—as good, as great—
Will from dishonor’s foul stain save
A friendless maid, whose sole estate
The virtue is her mother gave.
Be Ackmet to an orphan girl
More than the father, who hath sold
Her life, and with it virtue’s pearl,
So basely for a little gold !

Be she, to Ackmet as a daughter ;
Or, if not such, a virtuous slave,
Who will forget that gold hath bought her—
Serving him faithful to the grave :
Or, if this may not, cannot be,
Give her, what most she longs to see,
The precious boon of liberty.”

XVII.

A flash of hot barbarian ire
Shot from the Arab's eye of fire !
He rose from that too soft divan
To serve an incensed African—
Who now was *man*—offended man !
Yet, of a manhood only brutal ;
For, in his dark brow's savage wrath,
No eye could trace the lustrous path
Of that which is in man immortal.

XVIII.

“Go!—to the far cell of the harem,
Whose doors have bolts of steel to bar them,
There, to repent at leisure, stay!
Learn that thou art an *Arab's* slave,
And what it is the love to have—
The love to scorn, of Ackmet-bey!
And thou, old Moor, guard well the place—
Let not an eye see that proud face;
For, mark me—by the scimitar
Which my brave sire did erst swear by—
Whoever sees Felicità,
That recreant, with thee, shall die!”

XIX.

This wrath-stroke would have felled another—
It only roused Felicità!
Her burning words she needs must smother;
But, each eye was a steadfast star—

With cold, fixed light, removed as far
From Ackmet's reach, as planets are !
Light borrowed from her radiant soul—
Purer than is the sun's, for ne'er
A spot had marred its lustrous whole :
That moment she felt no more fear
Of the wild Arab's eye of fire,
Than if it were a lower sphere,
And she were moving calmly higher ;
Near stood he, almost by her side—
A blazing comet in his flame—
But, to her heart a feeling came
That boundless space did them divide.



PART V.

FELICITÀ.

I.

How knows the prisoner when confined
By bolts and bars that shut out day—
When to the morning sun as blind,
As to the evening's milder ray ;
When every sound, as well as sight,
Is deadened by his prison wall ;
How knows he when profoundest night
Over earth lets her mantle fall ?
How—save by that mysterious sense—
That subtile, spiritual touch,
Which feels the unseen covering dense
Beneath which doth instinctive crouch
The soul, and hide its life intense.

So, when an unseen night of sorrow
Descending is upon the soul,
It shrinks with an uncertain horror—
Feels the black curtain slow unroll,
And hears a melancholy toll
Foretelling the dread morrow.

II.

Three times Felicità had told
To her own thought the midnight hour,
Which o'er her dark cell, damp and cold,
With heavier weight than day did lower:
'Twas the fourth night that she had spent
In that disgraceful banishment—
In that profound incarceration,
Deprived of light, heat, ventilation.
There, on the black, impervious wall,
Before her passed, in grim rotation,
Each scene of her brief life, and all

That might in future her befall ;
As from a magic lantern cast,
Ghastly, with funeral pace they passed :
Her cradle and her mother's pall
Together went, and by them glided—
Grinning and grimacing—a Satyr :
The cradle then, from pall divided,
She sleeping in it, and still at her
That object grinned, and there presided ;
Tho' a mild angel bent above her,
Who seemed to have the right to love her ;
But not the power she asked, to clasp
Her darling from that Satyr's grasp.

III.

Then came a child among the flowers—
Moistening them with life's earliest tear ;
Whilst ever these two different powers
Of good and evil hovered near :

Then rose a cloister, at whose gate
The Satyr, tho' outside, did wait ;
 Whilst inside of those huge doors massive
Appeared, near by a window-grate,
 A young girl sitting sadly passive :
The angel there was keeping watch,
 And now seemed nearer and more quiet,
Since fastened was the convent-latch
 Against her mocking evil spirit.
Pictures conflicting followed after—
 False hopes, and falser protestations ;
Tempestuous skies, tumultuous water,
 Dark fears, and darker intimations—
Barbarians, and a cruel barter :
 And then, she saw her struggles late—
 Her present doom all desolate ;
And then, passed other scenes mysterious—
 But half discerned, as thro' a veil ;
The Satyr's look grew more imperious—
 The angel's cheek more thin and pale.

I V .

Love came too, with his bow and arrow ;
But never Hymen and his torch—
—'Tho' once a church-yard and church-porch :
These changed into a chamber narrow ;
And then, into a lonely vale ;
When—just as came a scene more bright—
All vanished ! and another light
Shone thro' the crevice of her door—
She heard quick footsteps on the floor !
Who is it ? at this midnight hour
It could not be the friendly Moor—
He, servile slave, had only power
Of guard beside the outer sill ;
Nor, nearer came, save at the will
Of Ackmet-bey to bring her food,
And then outside the door he stood—
Passing it thro' a panel slidden,
Which instant closed again unbidden :

Hark ! now the rattling of a key—
Darkness, if it had eyes, might see
How shrinks the pale Felicità
Into her cell's deep corner far ;
She breathes by starts, convulsively,
And now as slips her door's strong bar,
Her breath suspended seems to be—
She gasps—she shrieks, "'Tis Ackmet-bey !"
No : 'tis to JULES the door gives way.

V.

As one, who suddenly awaking
From dreams that terrible make night—
From darkness all at once to light,
Struck instant blind, confused and quaking,
Sinks back again unconscious quite—
Till Reason from his vision taking
The meshes, puts his senses right,
And suits to morn his weakened sight ;

So, the affrighted maiden's eye
Long used to darkness, and her mind
Long harassed and entangled by
Portentous sights and dreamy meshes,
Were dazzled, puzzled and struck blind
By Jules' face and torch-light flashes:
Recoiled, half sensible she lay
Where glare and terror had spell-bound her;
In that far corner, crouched, he found her—
Hasted her prostrate form to stay;
Dumb first with fright himself—but soon
For him did Love thus importune:—

VI.

“Maiden, fear not! behold, 'tis I—
I come to save thee, or to die!
Three days—three endless days of pain—
Suspended between fear and hope—

I've watched the chance, the hour, the minute,
When I this prison-door might ope—

Might see thy face divine again,
And heaven, that shines for me within it:

At last I've found it—love has conquered—

My whole soul to the hope is anchored

To bear thee hence away with me,

Into life, light, and liberty.

Ackmet has eyed me ; for in vain

Guilt (no, ah no ; not guilt, but love !)

Seeks its charged secret to contain—

The steel and flint unconscious move,

The ready spark will fire the eye ;

And if the heart does not explode

At the first flash, its over-load

Menaces danger to all by !”

VII.

“To-night my loaded heart nigh burst—

’Twas held alone by Alla great !

For if its wrath had Ackmet curst,

Not only I, but thou too, must—

Thou innocent—have shared his fate :

My time had come ; the drug I mixed

With aromatics’ sweet disguise—

He smoked, and in contentment fixed

His eye, and slid to paradise ;

Then dropt his chiboque, fell asleep,

And I the key of his dreams keep !

The Moor, not his, *thy* faithful slave,

Will spill his dark blood thee to save ;

There’s not a living soul astir ;—

The moon has put her veil on her ;—

Darkness her mantle spreads for us ;

The gates unbolted are, why thus—

Ah, why Felicità demur ?

Alla bids all things now conspire
To bless the love I bear for thee;
Oh, fly! 'tis earth's—'tis Heaven's desire—
Their pledge is opportunity!"

VIII.

The maid stirred not : but fixed on him
Her eyes with feeling's moisture dim—
Like unto heaven's deep blue, when seen
Thro' a thin mist-veil all serene :—
His voice the spell of fear had broken,
And the brief moments he had spoken
Had roused that native force of truth,
Which made her, Hebe-like in youth,
The azure-eyed Minerva seem :
On him did full those blue orbs beam—
So mild, so like his life-long dream,
They melted into his young breast ;
While something dreaded they confest :

“Jules, couldst thou look into my soul,
(She knew not that 'twas in her eye—
That he who saw that, saw the whole)
“Thou wouldst see gratitude there lie
Too deep for straightened words to measure ;
But how can this repay the treasure
Of that true love thou giv'st to me,
Save love like thine its fountain be ?”

I X .

“It may be that I cannot love—
That when my being emanated
From the great Soul of all above,
He gave me only power to prove
That which makes woman lion-hearted,
Without her nature of the dove :
And yet, sometimes within I feel
That possibility of loving,
Which, once a woman like me proving,

'Twould be slow burning to conceal—
Would life, or death, be to reveal!
Sometimes when craves my inner nature,
—For *what* I know not, save it be
The aliment of sympathy—
I think there is somewhere a creature
On the wide earth in mental feature,
In heart and soul allied to me;
And I have vague dreams of a spirit
Robed in the charms of my ideal,
And sometimes think my heart could merit
That such an one became my real:
But something whispers that if here
On earth to me he should come near,
Tho' from my eyes he did conceal him,
My heart would see him, hear him, feel him;
And should my soul his own allure,
So that to me he did appear,
And could he see my heart, I'm sure
He would find there his portraiture.

X.

“ But know, brave Jules, that no assertion
That I loved thee, could make it so ;
Nor does the heart obey coercion—
Love at its own sweet will must go ;
Slaves we both are, and still may be,
But the soul owns no slavery.”

XI.

Her barbed words each its heart-thrust gave ;
But Jules, tho' bleeding, only saw
Beauty in her, and felt love's law
Bidding him *on*—if death to brave,
Living, or dying, her to save !
“ Waste no more words”—he quick replied—
“ Fly with me—fly ! the night's far spent ;
To know to-morrow that I tried
To save thee, but in vain—and *died*,

Will make thee all as vain lament,
But ease not thine imprisonment :
Then rise, and fly with me—O, move !
I only ask thy life—not love :
Ah no ! I do not come to thee
To change alone thy slavery—
To make thee free I ask—and I
Will on that freedom look—and die !
Here's Ackmet's purse ; and from its gold
He paid thy price when thou wert sold,
And Alla's self will smile the day
Its gold frees thee from Ackmet-bey !"
He spake—and bore in his glad arms
The weight of her unsullied charms !
The faithful Moor threw wide the gate,
Perchance there at death's door to wait
Till morning's sun should see his blood
Darken the sill whereon he stood.

XII.

Inexplicable Night ! thou broodest
 With thy wide spread, maternal wing
Over earth's children all—the rudest,
 The vilest of her offscouring,
With the same gathering, sheltering care,
 As over Beauty's true offspring—
Who ask not patronage to share ;
 But come to thee their hearts to bring—
Thy starry glories worshipping.
Thy pensive shadow, which professes
 Devotion's spirit to impart,
The aid and covering no less is
 Of treachery and the murderous heart :
O Night ! thou, of all goddesses,
 Patron of good and evil art !

XIII.

Jules, with his palpitating treasure,
Paused not for breath, till clear he stood
Where distance did pursuit outmeasure ;
And there, in deathliest solitude—
—Tho' in the city's very breast,
Whose pulses seemed to have stopt beating,
So deep the silence was of rest—
He could not help aloud repeating,
“Thanks ! heart-thanks to thee, Alla blest !”

XIV.

But, whither to direct his way,
Poor youth ! how knew he ? Could the heart
Be that which Wisdom's rule doth sway,
It would not from its impulse start
So often nobly, yet in vain ;
But wait till sure its end to gain.

Felicità more calm than Jules,
By nature, and thought's sober rules,
Was first to speak : " Where shall we go,
Brave Jules, I know not, dost thou know ?"
" Cling only to my throbbing side,"
He said, " and Alla be our guide !
But, should the stealthy step of guilt
Be in this darkness lurking by ;—
Should my heart's blood be sudden spilt,
From that death-struggle, maiden, fly—
Save thyself, and leave me to die !"

XV.

He seemed to speak prophetic words—
To the maid's bosom they were swords !
But ere she could reply, a tread,
Wily and cat-like, came behind ;
More fleet, more silently they sped,
Hoping some turning-point to find :

But, ah ! those to misfortune mated,
To work their own harm oft seem fated ;
 Like Orpheus, who, against his will,
The fatal look gave, which him cost
Eurydice—his doubly lost !
Felicità, to silence sworn,
Spoke—and death from her words was born !
 That gentle voice the blood did spill
Of him to whom she owed the most ;
It was her father's ruffian knife
Which reddened in that deadly strife—
Her father's hand which hers did grasp ;
'Twas death that in his arms did clasp
The youth who gave for her his life !
 Unhappy maiden ! not a pause
To wipe his wet and still warm brow—
 To weep o'er what her voice did cause :
“ *On !*” said th' assassin—“ onward now !”
'Twas vain—the maiden could no more—
Fainting she fell in that fresh gore ;

Hands blood-stained bore her quick away—
Who feared not God, feared Ackmet-bey !

XVI.

Fleeing the Arab's dreaded wrath,
With his piastres and his daughter,
The murderer took the quickest path
To France again across the water.
There revolution's strife he found—
The fair metropolis, in arms,
Turned to a bloody battle-ground,
And robbed for him of all gain's charms.
The wicked flee when none pursues !
The dastard, gathering up his all,
Left the conflicting capital :
No dauntless arm had he to use
In her defence ;—he nothing saw
Of majesty in right—his law

Of liberty but license was.

In sordid bosoms patriot fire
No spark of its pure ardor has ;
The trafficker's unique desire
Was gain—his country, saved or lost,
Not one of his piastres cost :

His country ! he no country had—
Vice is a cosmopolitan !

France was to him a home but sad
When to decrease his trade began—
A vagabond thro' earth he ran,
And gold made any clime look glad.

PART VI.

FELICITÀ.

I.

IF Love inspire the poet's rhyme,
Where finds the Muse more fitting story
Than in Italia's ardent clime,
Which owes to love, as art, its glory?
Where the rapt DANTE, filled with awe
Of love as of a thing divine,
In beatific vision saw
His soul's ideal on him shine,
In beauty sublimated thrice,
Tho' still in form his BEATRICE!

II.

Whence love-eyed PETRARCH in his LAURA
Saw all the angel gifts and graces
That woman here did ever borrow
From spirits of celestial places ;
And where he sang those living beauties
In sonnets turned to Paradise—
Which linger, broken tho' his lute is,
As echoes of Heaven's melodies.

III.

Where TASSO, unto love too loyal
To serve his Duke and be its traitor,
Avowed, 'twas for a lady royal,
Love than her princely rank far greater :
Ah, fatal flame ! for him creator
Of every evil : tho', to mate her,

He had, what she ne'er understood,
What have all poets—royal blood.

I V .

And love-enkindled ARIOSTO
In Italy made romance song ;
And here have burned with passion's glow
How many of the shining throng !
The great heart of old ANGELO
Grew luminous with love's live spark—
That, lighting up his forehead dark,
Kindled cold marble with its flame :
Here love inspired BOCCACCIO,
And gave his romances to fame ;
Here stirred dramatic ALFIERI—
Love long unblessed, but never weary,
Since unsuppressed, its fire could free
Outburst in burning tragedy.

Yes: Italy and Love as one
Rise in the thought of poets now;—
The myrtle on Italia's brow
Shows not its evergreen alone;
For there, beside it, living glows
Fresh as of yore, love's warm red rose.

V

To Italy the trafficker
Turned now his avaricious eyes:
Meaning from thence to sail with her,
Whose beauty there would bring a prize,
Into the Orient: she beside
The dark-browed man did seem to glide
As might beside the wolf a lamb,
When that wolf has devoured her dam,
And, waiting for new appetite,
Devours her with carnivorous sight.

But, the avenger's long stayed wrath
Followed this time the monster's path ;
His hour had come ! disease assailed him—
The power of evil sudden failed him ;
He was that dreadful thing to see—

A man of Heaven and earth bereft,
To his own Hellish nature left
Alone, the dupe of crime to be,
Evil now turned his enemy !

VI.

True, by his couch stood ever near
An angel, but her blue eyes clear,
To him heaven's mocking mirror seemed—
Wherein his fiendish nature gleamed
With glare that made him himself fear !
Oft, when with gentle hand she took
Some beverage to him, from her look

He started back : as might some creature
Foul, and of monstrous form and feature,
Who nearing to a lakelet's brink—
On leaning over thence to drink,
His frightful visage therein sees,
And from his own vile image flees.

VII.

Italia to the maid had been
A fair dream in the distance seen ;
But now, became, in all its beauty,
A dread—the place of sacrifice—
Where love must yield to loathsome duty,
And taste dry up 'mid art's supplies.
Dark days and lurid nights on ran,
And with his torturing self still struggled,
And writhed in pain the coward man !
Sometimes from Hope's rich realm he smuggled

A comfort-grain ; but soon detected
By Conscience—vigilant police—
He lost the seed which he expected
Would in his native soil increase :
Could he have planted there that grain,
His labor had been all in vain—
Hope was exotic to the soil,
And never would have blessed his toil.

VIII.

At length his gold began to waste—
This, in advance, was Hell to taste !
His grasping nature, always crabbed,
As demoniacal, grew rabid :
He foamed and bit his fevered lip—
Refused the cordial cup to sip ;
Shrieked that of gold he was bereft—
Clinched his remaining coins—fate cursed—
And suffocating, died of thirst !
Felicità alone was left.

IX.

Alone on earth—in youth and beauty—
A stranger in a stranger land !
Her foe—now conquered by Death's hand—
Claiming from her the last sad duty.
She buried—"buried out of sight"—
Him, who to curse her, gave her light ;
And then her nature from long tension—
—Three lingering months had thus elapsed—
Tho' wide its powers were of expansion,
Sunk down exhausted and collapsed.

X.

Evil, that could not taint her soul,
Seemed for her torment doubly eager—
As if her dead sire's presence foul
Haunted her, with grim visage meagre:—

It chanced that as she lay at noon
After the burial, in that swoon,

A woman—who no woman's heart
Did in her larcenous bosom carry—
Came in, as pity her did hurry

To act the neighbor's kindly part:
But what spy there her greedy eyes—
The maiden, who unconscious lies?
No: gold, piled up where Death's hand laid it—
Avarice to avarice betrayed it!

XI.

There was no moment to be lost—
Theft from the dead might life have cost:
With sacrilegious hand she grasped
Those coins from Death's clutch just unclasped:
And now, to cover up the deed,
Feigning herself the friend of need,

She called, in Pity's voice, for aid,
And bade them bear the swooning maid
Into a nunnery near by,
Where care and medicine's supply
Awaited always such as she,
From sisters chaste of charity.

XII.

Where opes Felicità those eyes
Which never yet have seen joy's day?
Who bends o'er her, whose calm touch tries
Life's pulse, which ebbing seemed away?
Has she not seen before that brow?
It seems—it *is* the bright resemblance
Of her *ideal*, faintly now
Rising up in her dim remembrance!
That liquid eye which beams on her,
Seems of her life interpreter;

She speaks not, but it speaks a tongue
Whose music in her ears hath rung
Clear amid all the sounds of strife
Which have surrounded her thro' life :
She struggles—from those spirit-throes
Joy new born springs! and all her woes
Seem lessening, shrinking to the past—
Oh! is she to be blest at last?
Her brain whirls! now a stinging steel
Her white and rounded arm doth feel;—
A sanguine flow ;—her dazzled eye
Sees clearer—her lips part—a cry!
“What means all this?—Oh! where am I?”

XIII.

Among the checkered race called human
There are—like planets among stars—
Rare specimens of man and woman,
Whom the primeval curse scarce mars:

'Twould seem as if the great Creator,
Who man in his own likeness made,
Would yet that image see portrayed
In some, than their own species greater ;
Greater, not in the common sense
Of noble birth, and wealth transmitted ;
But, by divine inheritance,
For that imperial court befitted
Where intellect and heart preside—
Where man seems almost deified.
There are alas ! among the living
Men who are only moving clods ;
There are too, for ambition striving,
Those who in mind are demigods,
Yet, who in heart are demidevils ;
And not among earth's lesser evils
Are such, whose demon-hearts control
All that is godlike in the soul.

XIV.

GIACINTO was that noble being
In heart and mind symmetrical !
No less deep-feeling, than far-seeing,
He had that spark electrical
Which carries into other hearts
Feelings which God direct imparts
Unto the few, his own elect,
Who in their lives his heaven reflect :
And he had too, that union rarer
Of beauty physical and moral—
That, joined with gifts and graces oral,
Gives, whomsoever is its sharer,
A power o'er others to be dreaded
If it were not with honor wedded.
A look on his truth-beaming face,
In all true hearts, to love gave place ;
And if Giacinto e'er was hated,

'Twas by some soul of low degree—
Intrinsically to evil mated ;
For, to have been his enemy,
Were foe to good itself to be !

X V .

Born not to wealth, or noble title,
In his veins blood the noblest ran ;
He was that, by which lords grow little—
Queen Nature's inborn nobleman !
And he had studied—deeply studied ;
But never to be vainly great ;
Unlike those fertile minds o'erflooded
With knowledge that doth weeds create—
Which grow of verdure desolate—
His mind a garden was, well weeded,
And planted with the choicest flowers ;
Whate'er he gained anew there seeded,
And grew mature thro' toilsome hours.

XVI.

His wit was satire which, the keenest,
Knows when its lance in rest should be ;
Tho' he despised not man the meanest,
As not the greatest envied he :
Self-taught he was, by self must live ;
So, he had chosen that profession
Which to his fellow-man would give
Both of his mind and heart possession :
From manhood's opening he had striven
To live for others, not himself,
To give of what to him was given ;
While for its own sake scorning pelf :
And his professional career
He loved, its labors and vexations,
It brought the human heart more near,
And in these intimate relations

He knew, as if by intuition,
The suffering spirit to control,
And thus was he that true physician—
Both for the body and the soul.

XVII.

As charity to him was natural,
Some duties to himself he made,
And often visits, thus collateral,
Unto the sisters' convent paid :
There to Misfortune's sheltered offspring,
Aided by woman's gentle care,
He gave his services—an offering
Where suffering called him every where.
Thus, at the age of twenty-five—
Tho' fewer years his smooth brow told,
—For feelings true keep youth alive—
Giacinto was in good deeds old :

And *he* it was, who softly bending
Over the couch of Innocence
An angel seemed, from Heaven descending,
Unto Felicità—and hence
Her strange awaking from that trance.

XVIII.

Weeks sped, and still the maiden lay
The victim of slow, wasting fever ;
And still unwearied, day by day,
A ruling spirit guided ever
Those sisters of meek charity
Who near her couch did watching stay.
Oh, woman ! woman *true*, in thee
Our eyes Heaven's blessed angels see !
If thou didst cause all human woes,
In thee man finds woe's antidote—
All that can human bliss promote ;
If death he to thy frailty owes,

Unto thine agonizing strife
He owes this, and eternal life ;
For life, in thy first error slain,
Thy Seed hath purchased him again—
Thro' *thee* Heaven's curse is countermanded :
And as thy body once expanded
With the Divinity it held ;
So, when with love thy heart is swelled,
We know that overshadowed still
Thou by th' immaculate Spirit art—
That holy seed thy breast doth fill,
And germinate in thy warm heart ;
Each fragrant charity of thine
Is living fruit of Love divine !

X I X .

Weeks passed : yet only days they seemed
Unto Felicità, who dreamed

For the first time the dream of love !
LOVE—to whose wand enchanted move
The hours, as if on shining wings
They flew to angel whisperings !
She suffered not : her spirit basked
In the first sunshine it had known ;
For her lost gold she never asked—
A queen she felt upon a throne,
And seemed a world-wide wealth to own.
In this ecstatic state, to those
Who would her fevered mind allay
With the cool balsam of repose,
She seemed as one not long to stay—
As one who saw by second sight
Opening before her Heaven's pure light.

X X .

But now, a crisis came : she slept—

That long, still sleep, which seems a *Power*,
By which life's functions all are kept

In mild abeyance ; many an hour
She lay like death, while dewy calm
Diffused thro' all her nerves its balm :

At length she woke, without a pain—
She breathed long breaths—she lived again !

Oh joy ! life, no more life in vain,
Like a strung harp now music gave
To his touch who that life did save :
And thus, unto the virgin mother—
Who she was taught, above all other,
Did virgin hearts protect and bless—
She sung out her new happiness :

“ Thanks to thee, Holy One,

Dwelling above—

Patron of maidens,

And mother of love !

Thanks ! for the new life

Which flows in my veins ;

Thanks ! for the past strife

Of sorrows and pains.

Thanks ! for all suffering,

That in its stern rigor

Hath given my spirit

New beauty and vigor :

Thanks ! for the sunshine

Which dawns on my soul—

Making the clouds of grief

Backward to roll.

Thanks ! for this feeling,

Whatever it be,

Thro' all my sense stealing

Like sweet melody ;

Thanks! 'tis no evil
Which hideth away,
When at thine altar
My soul kneels to pray :
Thanks! that it leads me,
With heart warm and free,
Into thy presence,
As if 'twere from thee :
Thanks! for this feeling then,
Like thy love pure—
Help me, chaste mother,
That thus it endure :
Goodness its fountain—
Oh! let it still rise
Up, where the source is
Which goodness supplies.
Thanks then, thanks ever,
Blest Mother above—
Patron of loving hearts,
Thanks for this love!"

The stars which on Creation's morn
 Outburst in choral song together,
Felt no more sense of joy new born,
 Than did this maid ; who asked not whether
The world she built herself was real,
Or, a creation but ideal.

XXI.

The child that feels a mother's breast
 Warm beating to its velvet cheek—
That in her eye sees *that* exprest,
 Which uttered words could never speak ;
Questions as much if its own love
 Finds in that bosom a response,
As did this maiden—raised above
 All doubt in her preeminence—
Question if her heart's quickened beat
Another's bosom did repeat.

The tide of her own sea of feeling
So strong was, that it bore her on,
Perchance in its deep flood concealing
The rock that love might split upon :
The ice-crust, which had hid her nature,
Now with the current borne away,
Emotion, like a curbless creature,
Rushed forth with impulse naught might stay.

X X I I .

Giacinto, like all generous spirits,
Who estimate too low their merits,
Never in other minds expected
To see, as in a glass reflected,
Impressions his meek self had made ;
But, keeping always in the shade,
He thought that only felt and seen
His benefits, not *he*, had been :

Swayed ever by compassion's law,
He in the maiden only saw
The sufferer—one whose bloom of life
Had withered been by grief and strife;
And when, beneath his healing care,
 Her cheek and lip became less pale;
When her great beauty grew more fair;
 When unto him she told her tale—
 Lifting from modest grief the veil;
He listened, as doth ever list
The love-inspired philanthropist,
When Sorrow its deep secret bares,
Which by a right divine he shares:
He burnt—his ardor was compassion,
 By purest sentiment refined;
But, not a spark of selfish passion
 Was with that holiest flame combined.

XXIII.

And so, he never once suspected
The impulse which her bosom stirred ;
Nor, on a deeper woe reflected,
When he her thrilling story heard.
If sees the humane passer by
His fellow struggling with the wave,
He thinks not of some darker fate
Which may, if rescued, him await ;
He questions not for what, or why—
His only feeling is to *save* :
So, the humane Giacinto saw
That maiden struggling with her woes—
Obeyed instinctively love's law,
To which fear nothing can oppose ;
Drew her with strong, yet gentle force,
From out an overwhelming sea,
And from affection's living source
Supplied her needed sympathy.

XXIV.

When wan disease to bloom gave way,
He went forth with her to the fields,
And tried reviving strength to stay
With the true cordial nature yields :
Then, for the first time, she awoke
To the fresh morning of the year—
Spring thro' her myriad voices spoke
Joy's language to her ravished ear :
Her heart with rapture well nigh broke !
As doth the exile's, when his yoke
Is rent, and he returns, to hear
His native accents free and clear,
Heaven's blessing on his heart invoke.

XXV.

From her gay coloring of joy
Nature was painted all anew :

The sky put on a heavenlier blue—
The trees and fields a greener hue ;
The lamb grew whiter, and less coy—
More frolicksome the sportive boy ;
And when skipped round in giddy whirls
The rosy, dimpled, dark-eyed girls,
The locks which o'er their shoulders streamed
To her with livelier lustre gleamed—
Joy's sunlight played among those curls !

X X V I .

Joy too, was music in her soul,
Whose echoes did all round her roll ;
In every thing there was a voice
That like her spirit's did rejoice :
The brooklet, by trees hidden half,
Sent from its hiding-place a laugh ;
The doves, that cooed upon the eaves ;
The whispers of the forest leaves ;

The squirrel chirping in the beech-wood ;
The insect humming round the thistle ;
The robin's first parental whistle ;—
—Each talking love, as plain as speech could!—
The carols of all amorous birds,
And every sound that morning moved
From every thing that lived and loved,
Seemed to her, her own spirit's words.

XXVII.

Nature did in her realm employ
The very *motion* of her joy !
The tame deer bounding o'er the lawn ;
The liberal leap of mountain fawn ;
The glad spring of the fountain's jet ;
The dance of hillside rivulet ;
And every creature's springtime gambol
Her heart's wild beatings did resemble :

Throughout all nature was revealing
One—'twas her own ecstatic feeling!
All things on earth, and all above,
Seemed frolicking in joy's wide ocean,
And all inspired by one emotion—
The universal soul of LOVE.

XXVIII.

The wide world was in love with her,
And she in love with the wide world!
The breeze which did the meadows stir,
Kissed too, her cheek; the smoke that curled
Upward at morn, as incense rose
From hers to the great heart of love;
The breath of flowers, at daylight's close,
Sweet vespers in her soul did move;
Each, all, to her, gave some expression
Of kindred feeling: one confession—

One only—was there wanting still,
The measure of her joy to fill :]
He, who for her gave love's sweet tongue
To senseless nature and to brute,
Upon love's theme was ever mute—
How could he do himself such wrong?

XXIX.

Silence as forcible can be
As words, and speak more thrillingly !]
In time this silence seemed to jar
Love's concord in Felicità :

Her own heart often to her lips
Sprang up, demanding passage free ;
But her mouth closed instinctively,
And to her very finger-tips
She blushed and thrilled to modesty.
All other themes Giacinto talked,
When they together sat, or walked,

And if her heart unsatisfied
Felt, perchance, sometimes when they parted,
His mind a source was from which started
A thousand rills that thought supplied :
But, soon her burning soul these dried,
And all her being felt the thirst—
That still unquenched—by love was merst,
Till it became a sort of fever—
An inward fever, intermitting—
From which song did alone relieve her :
Thus, when one day at her work sitting,
She to love's influence did give her—
—All other thoughts and things forgetting—
Giacinto at her open door
Stood unperceived, whilst, o'er, and o'er
She sang in words her heart befitting
The secret from him hid before :
“ Why, if he loves me,
So silent always?
Love, when it moves me,
Its feeling betrays ;

But he says never,
In tones of the dove,
Thee I love ever—
Thee only I love!

Is not all showing
That he my heart sways—
As the tide's flowing
The moonbeam obeys?—
Yet, the words never
His tender lips move—
Thee I love ever,
Thee only I love!

Nature reveal'd to me
Love night and day;
Soft tones appeal to me—
All seems to say—
Like a harp's quiver,
Whose strings zephyrs move—

Love me for ever—

Thee ever I love !

But no response to me

Comes from his breast—

Never sweet melody

His love confest ;

Will that voice never—

—All music above—

Say, love me ever—

Thee only I love ?

Why did he life give me

Back from the tomb,

If not to love me ?

For love is life's bloom :

Live shall I never

Till tones of the dove

Say, love me ever—

Thee only I love !”

XXX.

Giacinto with suspended breath
Listened, turned pale, and started back!
As one who, having saved from death
A child, and on the homeward track
Led it—direct, as he supposed,
While by night's darkness turned astray—
To whom morn sudden had exposed
A jagged precipice which lay
Before them, yawning for its prey.

XXXI.

Turning from thence, with noiseless feet,
He trembling made a quick retreat;
Sought his own chamber, and there pondered—
At his unconscious blindness wondered;

Reproached himself with bitter speech ;
Then, as a penitent low kneeling,
Asked pardon for the fatal feeling
Which only pity him did teach,
 And sought (not of the holy mother,
For superstition ne'er could reach
 His soaring mind, which to no other
Than God himself and Truth did kneel)
 Sought heavenly wisdom to undo
Love's chain, or bind with hooks of steel,
 By friendship forged, its links anew.

XXXII.

For days he saw no more the maid,
 Hoping that absence might prepare
Her heart, which had itself betrayed,
 The freezing light of truth to bear.
He never questioned his own heart
 If love unseen was lurking there ;

Because its depths in every part
Lay to his sunny mind all bare,
And at a glance he saw no where
A sign of love : Love's ill-aimed dart
Had only pierced one bosom fair—
Failing to wound that other breast,
Whose balm, had it outpoured, possest
Alone for her wound, healing art.

XXXIII.

Yet, was Giacinto formed to love,
As only nobler beings are,
With a soul-passion, far above
The feeling lower natures share :
Of love he had no light conception,
As the spent impulse of an hour ;
He felt it a divine perception
Of beauty's natural, moral power,

Which Heaven did to the mind impart
Only thro' medium of the heart ;

That in all bosoms true, must be
An innate spark of love concealed,

Which, kindling but to sympathy,
In unconsuming fire revealed :

He knew that none had ever proved

What real life was, till he loved ;

But love was a spontaneous fire—

It kindled seldom to desire,

And never from its law did vary

To serve will only arbitrary.

XXXIV.

He felt himself but half a soul,

And knew that somewhere on the earth
Dwelt one who could make life a whole :

Thus was his heart oft reaching forth—

As the new moon, but half a sphere,
Seems always reaching to attain
Her other half; but, full again,
In calm content shines round and clear.

It would have been to find a flaw
In Sovereign Nature's perfect law,
Had these two beings, parallel
In heart and spirit, met; and well
Giacinto knew Felicità

To be in all too much his peer—

That their resemblance was the bar
Against a union still more near;
That love which best doth love requite
Is centered in its opposite:
Thus hoped he, and thus half believed,
That the maid had herself deceived—
That to love's law her mind would wake,
And her heart find its own mistake.

XXXV.

But what, thro' this slow age of time,
Thought, hoped, believed, Felicità?
Did she still sing her plaints in rhyme?
Or, did Faith bear her soul sublime
Above contending passions' war,
Where, with calm spirits, hers might chime?
Ah, none of these! 'twas one long night
Of sleepless love's untiring watch—
Listening, and starting up, to catch
A sound, which distant far and slight,
Could vibrate on Love's fine strung ear
As thrillingly, as when so near
That ears less exquisite might hear:
Her heart's Æolian harp all strung
Upon her open casement hung,
Waiting in silence night and day
For Love's sweet breath thereon to play;

Suspended were its spirit-tones—

No music woke there; tho' sometimes
That harp sent forth unearthly moans,
As if a shade from other climes
Breathed on its chords at dead of night,
While motionless they were to sight.

XXXVI.

Not only did her soul keep fast—
Her body too, without repast,
Love's vigils with the spirit keeping,
Wandered, unresting, as unsleeping,
From door to door, from stair to stair—

Her sad soul's faithful sentinel,
Whose watch-cry ever, "*No one there!*"

As ice upon hope's wild flame fell.
'Twas not, tho' long, and dark, and weary,
The starless night of black despair;
For that is still and cold, as dreary;
While here were glimmering everywhere

Lights which as *ignes fatui* shone,
Alluring her heart ever on.

XXXVII.

Love for its idol, hope, holds out
Like a strong fighter against doubt,
And rather than the contest yield,
Takes subterfuges for its shield—
Expertly parrying each blow
Aimed by its tantalizing foe :
Thus the poor maid, by doubt assailed,
To shield the staggering hope she nourished,
Made pretexts reasons why had failed
Giacinto in his visits cherished :
Perchance he, in his turn, was ill;—
—This thought less comforted, than pained—
Perchance, against his own free will,
Despotic duty him detained ;

Perchance he loved, but thro' keen sense

Of honor, towards her he protected,

He deemed that love for confidence,

A shade on Honor's name reflected;

And thus he sought by absence dure,

His hopeless love to tame or cure :

Could he but know she suffered still—

That he had wounded even in healing ;

His heart her medicine would distil,

And hers assuage his wound revealing.

“Love must itself” declare, thought she,

In face of maiden modesty,

“Feeling so true, so pure as this,

May pour its spirit into his ;

Ay, he shall know that love in woman

Gives force, not man's, but superhuman.”

XXXVIII.

Love reasons not : it was sophism—
—Seeming than wisdom's self more wise—
Which—like the serpent's skepticism
Beguiling Eve in Paradise—
Glided thro' darkness to the ear
Too facile of Felicità—
Beguiling thus away her fear,
Until she saw the morning star
Of promise thro' those shades appear :
And when Giacinto came at last,
Day with him broke upon her soul !—
Doubts dismal shadows back did roll—
Her long conflicting night seemed past.

XXXIX.

Of his late struggles not a trace
Rested upon his beaming face ;

Yet, fewer words than ordinary
He spoke, and these were choice and wary :
This she perceived not ; her glad eyes
Saw only in him joy's sunrise ;
The hapless missive was prepared
Which all her glowing bosom bared ;
And when he left her, in his hand
 She slid the letter ; while a flush,
That he too well did understand,
 Suffused her cheek—love's, not shame's blush.

X L .

Ye who have passed the endless hour
 Of waiting-love—have felt the changes
Of feeling's quick mercurial power—
 —Which thro' the heart's thermometer
 From Zero unto boiling ranges
As rapidly as thought can stir—

Ye can best coloring give to all
The phases of this maiden's mind
In that unending interval
Of thought and feeling undefined,
'Twixt her avowal, and his answer:
The actual time indeed was long;
For with unguarded words to lance her,
Had been true womanhood to wrong:
Each thought's fine steel-point, that might be
A wound to love or modesty,
Was sheathed with gentleness, so soft,
That when that fatal answer entered
Where her deep life of love was centered,
Absence of pain, delusive oft,
Deceived her, while at first she found
No sting in that too deadly wound,
And blinded her a little hour
To calm decision's honest power.

XLI.

In this response was nothing wanting
Of all that Friendship's heart could offer ;
Though nought of love was there, as granting
Assent to what her heart did proffer :
He told her Friendship had no wings—
That Love was blind, and on his pinions
Oft flew away : alas, how clings
Passion to its frail, fond illusions !
She heeded not those whisperings ;
But soared to Error's wide dominions,
Loosing her from Truth's bit and bridle ;
And there excursions made audacious—
Clinging to false hope, her heart's idol,
With a grasp deathly pertinacious.

XLII.

Again she wrote: that Friendship's voice
Was not the echo of her bosom's;
That her heart only could rejoice
To music of love's soft southwest,
Which stirs to sweetness all the breast,
As Zephyrs stir the scents of blossoms.
Silence with freezing force replied
More fatally than words could do!
As cold intense to flesh applied
Gives a keen sense of burning too;
So icy silence only burnt
Into her breast as mortal fire—
In love's strong agony she learnt
Then, how consuming is desire!

XLIII.

Before her frenzied fancy rose,
Oft bathed in blood, the hapless youth
Whose unblest love a life did close
So full of beauty and of truth :
“ O Jules ! ” she cried, “ when I gave thee
Truth’s lancing thrust, thine agony
By Fate was pitied ; so, she gave
Thee and thy woe an early grave,
And this is her revenge on me !

Be more forgiving *thou*—O come,
Brave youth ! tho’ now a bodiless vision,
And once more liberate from prison

My suffering spirit—from life’s doom,
Compared with which death is elysian ! ”

XLIV.

The virgin sisters saw her strife ;
But nothing said, and only tried—
By gentle charities applied—
To calm her wound, and yet the life
Which love had lost, thro' love restore,
That thus, it purified the more
Thro' suffering, might attain the bliss
Of virtue's perfect happiness,
And long endure their aid to be
In works of heavenly charity :
But love—that can the bosom ope
To every noble, generous feeling—
When cold despair entombs its hope,
And Heaven is deaf to its appealing,
Can close that breast in egotism
Upon its own—a world-wide woe—
Or freeze it into stoicism
Till it feels only *life*—its foe !

PART VII.



FELICITÀ.

I.

IN gentle natures love, concealing,
Like poison may life's heart corrode
Slowly and silently ; revealing
Its secret only in such mode
As other slow sure poisons speak—
Thro' the wan eye and pallid cheek :
But in strong natures love's a passion
That worketh madness when restrained ;
As steam, that raging from compression,
Breaks iron which its force contained ;
So the pent forces of Love's breath
Must have an outlet—be it death !

II.

Giacinto's day of kindly toil
Was finished, and the midnight oil
Wasted within his lamp, while he
Conned science, or philosophy :
And now he laid aside his book
Into mind's mysteries to look ;
Where lost in the profound of thought,
He gathered treasures to be brought
Into the light of day, with which
Impoverished natures to enrich :
Unto the spirit-world he listened ;
Nor heard approaching footsteps rash—
Till like a meteor's sudden flash,
A blazing eye before him glistened !
What is it there ? the startling vision
Of passion, in its wildest beauty ?
Or Frenzy's glaring apparition,
That from reflection's tranquil duty

Sudden his manhood calls "to arms!"
Against himself and woman's charms?

III.

Or, is it ——? Yes; FELICITA!
Her dark hair o'er her shoulders streaming--
Veiling one eye, the other beaming
Amid those tresses, like a star
Thro' the black shades of midnight gleaming;
Her pallor, thro' this parted veil,
Like to Death's visage, freezing pale,
By the black pall, which hanging over,
Its ghastliness doth not all cover:
Her light, within a lantern's shade,
Seems like a funeral torch to glimmer;
And in her other hand a blade,
With red glare from that light, doth shimmer:

Her voice a terror in him wakes—
As from a sepulchre it speaks !

I V .

“ Behold !” she said, while that knife flashed,
As with the hand a tear she dashed,
“ The frenzied child behold, in me,
Of unrelenting Destiny !
Nature that made me to command
The heart of man, as beauty’s queen,
Blushes, ay, bleeds to see me stand
Before thee, as a suppliant mean,
Asking for love that it were meet
Should pray for favor at my feet.
Witness great Virgin, who protectest
The sacred rights that maidens share—
Thou, who thy saintly soul reflectest
In every virgin-bosom fair—

Witness thine image now, through scorn,
Defaced, deflowered, disgraced, forlorn !

And thou, my guardian angel mother,
Witness thy child, that never yet
Thy holy memory did forget—

Which honor wakens as no other
Memorial or love can do—

Witness with thy earth-bending eyes,
If in this state, to thee untrue,

Thou thy lost child dost recognize !
And thou, Oh, if the heart of man

Within thy bosom cold is beating,
Look, and deny, if manhood can,

Love to the maid, whose voice repeating
In agony its first, last prayer,
Implores thee, in Love's name, to share
A heart than which no truer lives,
Which here its life—or death—thee gives !”

V.

Giacinto, frozen by the sight
Of incensed love's majestic sprite,
 (For such the lofty maiden seemed—
Breaking thus on him in the night,
 So that at first he thought he dreamed)
The ice of sudden terror felt
 To love's subduing eloquence
As suddenly give way and melt :
 He knew the maid must quick go hence—
Her words to burn in him began,
And, if not less, or more than man,
Feeling would ere long conquer reason,
And in his head his heart breed treason.

V I.

Soon as she paused, or yielded rather
To feeling, which her words did smother

Giacinto took her hand, whose grasp
Convulsively the knife did clasp,
And prayed her to renounce that steel,
Which gentle hands should never feel,
And quick her steps with him retrace
To virtue's safer resting-place:
And he would there his word of honor
Pledge before Heaven, that looked upon her,
To be to her the truest friend
That God to woman e'er did send.

VII.

“No! not my friend thou 'lt henceforth be”—
In queenly wrath responded she—
“Thou art my heart's worst enemy!
Thou of the grave's sweet, silent rest
Didst rob me, throw me back on life,
—On life all loveless and unblest—

To teach me—who woe's cup had drained
Till not a bitter dreg remained—

For the first time what *is* heart-strife!
Or, if the friend thou would'st prove thee,
Take back the life restored to me—
With this knife quick my sorrows end,
And show thyself indeed my friend."

VIII.

"Already hast thou struck death's blow :

Oh ! let me linger not to die
A thousand times in one death slow ;
Or waste as tediously as snow

That in the sunless vales doth lie :
Grief beats against my bosom's bar

With fulness of a giant-force ;
All powers within me seem at war,
And rushing blood demands free course :

Pierce then, this heart! (she, kneeling here,
The covering from her breast withdrew,
And open laid to ravished view
Love's throne, as ivory white and clear)
Ope here a passage, that the flood—
The boiling flood of hopeless woe
May, gushing forth, drown with its flow
This life, dethroned, in purple blood."

I X .

"Abase not, maiden, on the knee"
—Giacinto answered with a sigh—
"That innate soul of royalty
Which unto me for blood doth cry :
Rise, live, and conquer thy great heart,
Which reason's conqueror strives to be !
And tho' as enemies we part,
True to ourselves if still are we,

Not long as foes we shall remain ;
Thou wilt concede that Friendship's chain
 (Which to the heart is silk to bear—
 To time as iron is to wear)
Shall join us in its links again."

X.

He said ; and as to lift her made,
But seized adroitly danger's blade ;
When, springing with indignant grace
Upon her feet, she raised her face,
And from those eyes of darkened blue
A lightning-stroke at him she threw—
A flash of mingled love and scorn,
Which of a Juno's wrath seemed born,
 And in its full blaze disappeared !
So suddenly, he half believed
 That in all he had seen and feared,
Delusive Fancy him deceived.

PART VIII.



F E L I C I T À .

I .

'Twas early Autumn—when the leaves
Begin to show a dying flush ;
When earth departed Summer grieves,
And merriest birds their carols hush ;
When winds thro' forests breathe in sighs ;
When clouds as funeral trains appear ;
When over pensive nature lies
A veil of hazy atmosphere :
'Twas in the twilight of the day—
That hour in every season holy ;
Shadows upon the spirit lay,
As over nature melancholy.

II.

Giacinto, pensive as the season,
And thoughtful as the brooding hour,
Sat all alone with sober Reason,
Yielding to melancholy's power.
Weeks, months had passed since that wild night
When frenzied passion startled sight,
And he again had never seen
The face of beauty's incensed queen.

III.

Long time he waited a recall,
And to the convent often went
To learn what did to her befall;
But him she kept in banishment.
"The Sisters" told him that her cheek,

Once always pale, now oft looked flushed;
That her voice tenderer grew and weak,
And that her towering soul seemed crushed:
That like a frost-touched flower she drooped—
Her matchless head to earth oft bending,
As heavy with oppressive thought;
That her form, upright once, now stooped;
That on her smooth brow lines were wrought
By passions inwardly contending:
But, that she uttered no complaint,
And all day long in mercy's deeds
Employed her hands—Love's suffering saint—
Ministering unto others' needs!

I V.

Giacinto, in this autumn twilight,
Was pondering gloomily these things;
When he perceived, as thro' a sky-light,
Above him, poised on luminous wings,

A form resembling bright conceptions
Of angels on their earthward missions—
—As sometimes to finite perceptions
They are revealed in heavenly visions :
His eye, transfixed by piercing light,
At first discerned not in that face
Aught, save refulgence dazzling bright ;
But, gazing, he began to trace
Features familiar to his sight,
Kindled by that divine expression
Which in Felicità seemed the gleaming—
The visible, sublime impression
Of Heaven's face on the human beaming.

V .

And yet the angel o'er him bending
Was not that maiden : was it, then,
Her mother's spirit, thus descending
To cheer and bless her child again ?

Or, on more welcome errand still,
Came she now—as ambassadress
From the stern court of Death, no less,
Than sent by Heaven’s sublimer will
Her child’s sad destiny to fulfil,
And bear her to the realms of bliss,
To learn there what is happiness?

VI.

Whilst thus he questioned the bright vision
Vanished; Night circled him about
With shadows, and thro’ fields elysian
The stars, as golden flowers, peeped out:
Himself beneath night’s curtain screening,
He watched intent these starry flowers—
As from them he would pluck the meaning
Of what surpassed dim reason’s powers.

VII.

From contemplation into revery
Small space there is, and this he leaped;
But back again as quickly stepped,
To greet another angel—one
Who came not in the dazzling livery,
In which Heaven's messenger had shone;
Tho' none the less Heaven-sent—for she
The angel was of Charity!

VIII.

She brought a message from the dying:—
A dove, that life away was sighing,
Into Giacinto's breast would pour
Love's plaintive melody once more.
To the heart's centre stirred his blood!
Another moment and he stood

By the white couch where Beauty's life
Was ebbing without pain or strife :
The quickened pulse ; the pale of death—
 Chased by a bright, but fatal glow ;
The pausing, then quick-heaving breath,
 As he approached her, all did show
That hopeless love may life's chords sever,
But life such love as hers kill never !

I X .

On him she turned those spiritual eyes—
 —In whose blue deep already beamed
The radiance of the opening skies,
 Whose waiting angel there she seemed—
And gave him, with Love's pardoning smile,
 Her white attenuated hand
In silence—speaking all the while
 Words his heart well could understand :

These words grew audible in speech
When calmed again her pulse's beat—
As if his hand her heart did reach,
And carry soothing to life's seat—
And thus she spake, in soft low tone,
As music from a tomb might moan :

X.

“Forgive the maid who wronged thee so—
Alas, what seemed her fault was woe !
It is not strange that she, whose life
Had been with sorrow one long strife,
Saw in thy cloudless brow the morning
Of a new life upon her dawning ;
Believed that thou the golden key
Didst hold of her heart's mystery ;
Since thou its secrets didst unlock—

Reveal the treasures of its love,
And make its inmost fibres move
With feeling's strong electric shock :
Oh, no ! it is not strange that she—
She who was Nature's simplest daughter—
Believed when that true mother taught her,
That what her bosom felt for thee,
Must live in thine—must mutual be—
Twin-born she said, was sympathy :
But, I have learned too, of another,
Truth which woe from experience wins—
That sympathy, of love the mother,
Conceives not always herself twins.

XI.

“ Heaven, that forgave my fond heart's error,
Hath taken from death all its terror,
And called me to a higher state,
Where dwells perchance my spirit-mate :

A sunless life hath mine been ever ;
Save where thy presence shed a ray
Across this soul, which ceases never
To thank thee for one cloudless day—
That left with me a sweet foretaste
Of heavenly love to which I haste.”
The dove, with her own sigh opprest,
Sank silent back into her nest,
Where downy white she lifeless lay ;
Save that her palpitating breast
Revealed where life did lingering stay
With love, that could not pass away.

XII.

Giacinto thrice essayed to speak ;
But sobs alone the silence broke :
And when at last in words he spoke,
Words too impoverished were and weak
To serve remorse which in him woke,
And would relief in utterance seek.

Moments there are in which a life
Of thought and feeling seems comprest—

When years of bitterness and strife
Wrestle together in the breast :

As drowning men, who in one minute
Live all their past lives o'er again—

To whom Death holds a glass and in it
Life's errors stretch their lengthened train ;

So, in that moment's agony,
Giacinto lived his past anew,

And now as murderous crime did see
His fatal candor, held to view
In light of an eternity.

XIII.

“Forgive me Heaven ! forgive me thou,
Divinest maid, its angel now !

If there be pardon for a heart
So dead to virtue's heavenly love,

That all in vain it did impart
Its mission from the court above;
Or, if forgiveness may divide
Its mercy with a homicide:
O live Felicità! and prove
How great is pardon, by my love!
For what love's passion failed to do,
Its pardon, godlike, shall awake;
My heart already, in review,
Sees, feels, too late, its sad mistake:
No: love can never feel too late—
Love is divine—its power to save
Can vanquish even death's stern fate,
And bring back Beauty from the grave."

XIV.

"Peace!"—said the maiden—"love is strong;
But stronger is the Power that wills
My spirit where it doth belong—
Which here my destiny fulfils.

Call me not back to life—to love
Which thou dost only seem to prove :
 Believe me—for the dying see
No longer darkly, thro' a glass ;
 But face to face the Truth, all free
From mists that with earth's shadows pass—
 As virtue to thee crime appears,
And virtue's strife as crime's remorse ;
 So friendship seen thro' pity's tears,
Is into love transformed by force,
 And seems to thee that flame diviner,
Which in my bosom still doth live—
 Which Death kills not ; but, as refiner,
Back to love's burning throne shall give.”

X V .

“ Yet say thou lovest me : Love is strange—
 It cherishes such dear delusions,

And words to things desired can change—
Feeding with them its known illusions!
Yes; say thou lovest! and loveless charm me;
As music it will drown Death's step,
And of earth's coward fears disarm me;
So, I to his embrace shall leap,
As if into thine arms I sank—
As if from that pure fount I drank,
For which my heart so long hath panted,
And which in Heaven's joy shall seem granted:
Ay, speak that charmed word again—
LOVE—for which life sighs out in vain!
Then I—with that blest prophet old,
Who did salvation's Hope infold—
Will say, "let me depart in peace;"
For to my heart Love now I hold,
And in that rapture life should cease!"

XVI.

A wound less deep than her's had healed
To the sweet balm of kindly feeling;
But, at her heart's core lay concealed
A worm, which drop by drop was stealing
Life's blood away—that nought could kill,
For 'twas his destiny to drain
The purple current from each vein—
'Then die himself with life's o'erfill.

XVII.

But day and night Giacinto watched
That maiden's human beauties pass
As flowers from the worm-eaten grass;
While spirit-charms, which angels' matched,
By her disease was only heightened—
While in her eye new lustre shone,
And on her cheek a glow unknown,
Which life's declining sun but brightened.

XVIII.

Oh! ye, to whom death striketh terror—
Who flee the chamber of the suffering;
Come where youth unto death is offering
Its guileless charms, and learn your error!
For where's the monster that transforms
True beauty into ghastliness?
No hideous power can Death possess
Over the face which feeling warms:
Pain may with feeling struggle—yet
Will moral beauty there preside;
Nor can death's icy seal, e'en, hide
The glow in which that brow is set—
Which frozen, still bears Heaven's signet.

PART IX.

FELICITÀ.

I.

THE early Autumn now was over :
The fallen leaves decaying lay ;
While warmth stole back, as a shy lover,
That parted, still doth lingering stay :
'Twas summer stript of birds and flowers—
Complaining thro' the rill all day
Of freshness lost, of vanquished powers,
And mourning beauty's swift decay :
A haze hung o'er the cloudless west,
Thro' which the setting sun poured gold ;
As if from Edens of the blest
Did angels, thro' a veil, behold

The parting convoy they had sent
To bear another spirit home—
From exile, from imprisonment,
Whose hour of freedom now had come.

II.

Felicità from her bed had risen
To view once more departing day,
And on a couch, half-sitting, lay
Beside the casement: her clay prison—
—A beauteous ruin to behold—
With gates all ready to unfold
At the divine word “liberty!”
Around her, praying in low whispers,
Gathered decorous the chaste sisters;
With crystals—purer none could be—
Upon their ’kerchiefs white, that dropped
Slowly from upturned lids, and stopped
Where welled up their fount, *charity*:

Beside her, wrapt in silence mournful,
Giacinto sat—his own eye glistening :
And now, prayer on its wing poised, listening
To a voice like far music tuneful,
Which from that waiting spirit poured,
And thus its quick release implored :

“Shades are falling,
Angels calling--
Blessed Virgin, let me come !
Death is dreary,
I am weary—
Bid them bear my spirit home.

“Woman’s suffering—
—My sin-offering—
Oh, accept thro’ thy Son’s blood !
Woe’s refiner
Made diviner
Even his soul, innately good.

“ Let mine, shining,
Thro’ refining
Of heart-agony, now rise
In the likeness
Of HIS brightness
Unto Love’s own native skies.

“ Mother sainted !
I have panted
Long thine eye of love to see ;
Death concealed it—
Death revealed it
Just now, watching over me.

“ How thy pleasure
Doth outmeasure
What those angels there enjoy !
Heaven’s high duty
Lights their beauty—
Thine maternal love’s employ !

“Heavenly mother!
There’s no other
In that angel-band so fair;
Envy *could* they,
Envy would they
What *born*-angels cannot share!

“Come Death, ease me!
Love, release me
From thy clinging earthly charms!
Farewell friends dear!
Love’s strife ends here—
Take me, mother, to thine arms!”

III.

With the last gleam of setting day
That radiant spirit passed away—
Here was no more Felicità!
But Heaven’s sky showed another star—
Adding new brightness there—whose ray
Beamed on Giacinto from afar.

I V.

The empty temple of her clay—
As marble white, by tapers lighted—
So beauteous shone that it invited
The loving mourner there to stay ;
And there Giacinto knelt to pray—
There fain would have resigned his breath,
And sealed love's tardy vows with death,
To be with her in Heaven united.

V.

“The Sisters” made of flowers her pillow—
—Flowers best befitting virgin-bloom—
And, 'twixt a cypress and a willow,
Laid all that beauty in the tomb—
Protected by the guardian-cross,
And wept—not over Beauty's loss—
But, that a daughter, true as she,
Was lost to meek-eyed Charity !

VI.

Yet theirs was not the final office
Of love to the departed novice ;
Giacinto's heart, that owed such debt
As Friendship was too poor to pay,
Raised the carved marble, which tells yet
Where blends with dust earth's fairest clay.

VII.

Oft at the hallowed twilight-hour—
That hour supreme of her departing—
When keen remorse had ceased its smarting,
Drawn by a sadder, holier power ;
He sought the turf inlaid with flowers,
—Beyond the city's domes and towers—
Where slept the maid—where angels hovered—
And on that turf devoutly kneeling,
His head to evening-dews uncovered—
His hands clasped o'er the fount of feeling—

Thus, in low whispers, unto God
Sent up his sorrow from that sod :

“Heart of human hearts supernal—
Living Source of life eternal!

From thee emanates
Effluent Love—a vital river—
Thy soul is the heart's life-giver—
Thy life love creates!

“God all-knowing, God all-seeing!
Thine eye penetrates my being
As a searching light:
Thou hast seen it thirsting ever
For this well-spring, which did never
Yet its thirst requite.

“’Twas because love's effluence tarried,
That my heart, a desert arid,
Gave no answering bloom
To the fair and fragrant blossom

Which did waste upon my bosom
Its divine perfume.

“Lay not to my charge the dying
Of this Flower, which vainly sighing
For responsive breath,
Shut its heart up, and infolding
Sweets, with bitterness corroding,
Faded into death.

“Had thy heart of love mine nourished,
This lost flower had never perished
In its own perfumes :
Perished ! ah, in Love’s blest Eden—
—Flower immortal of thy garden—
Fairer now it blooms !

“Peace my heart ! thou art too earthy—
God was just, and thou unworthy
To possess this Flower :
Love divine for aye will nourish,

What mine was too poor to cherish
For life's little hour.

“God, yet cheer me with its odors
Wafted here from Eden's borders,
As Love's sweet replies
To the yearnings of my spirit
Paradise, thro' love, to merit—
Love is Paradise!”

The End.

RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED:

BEING

THE FIRST IN THE SERIES OF

ROMANTIC BIOGRAPHIES

TO BE EDITED BY THE

REV. F. L. HAWKS, D.D., LL.D.,

One Vol., Cloth. Illustrated by

SIX BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS.

FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS BY THWAITES.

75 Cents. Gilt, \$1.00.

Third Edition.

"It is a charming narrative of the exploits of Richard Cœur de Lion; spirited, clear, and most agreeable in style; handsomely illustrated, and printed in very readable type. Such books cannot fail to be popular."—*Boston Transcript*.

"Mr. Dickerson, the publisher, of Broadway, sends us several pleasant volumes, foremost of which is a dashing account of the Life of Richard Cœur de Lion, an original copyright work, written with great point and spirit. It belongs to that favorite school of reading with the young represented by Sir Walter Scott's 'Tales of a Grandfather.'"—*N. Y. Churchman*.

"It contains a brilliant narrative of Richard the Lion-Hearted, divested as far as possible of the political history of his reign, and written with a view to the instruction and improvement of the young. The name of the Rev. Dr. Hawks is a satisfactory guaranty of the unexceptionable character of the work; the illustrations are numerous and spirited."—*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*.

JAMES S. DICKERSON,

PUBLISHER, NEW YORK.

HOME LIFE:

BEING

TWELVE LECTURES

BY

REV. WILLIAM HAGUE, D. D.

Price, \$1.00. Gilt, \$1.25.

Second Edition.

The following is the Table of Contents, and will indicate the character and scope of the book :—

- LECTURE I.—The Marriage Institution.
- LECTURE II.—Duties of the Husband.
- LECTURE III.—Duties of the Wife.
- LECTURE IV.—Duties of Parents to Children.
- LECTURE V.—Duties of Children to Parents.
- LECTURE VI.—Duties of Brothers and Sisters.
- LECTURE VII.—Mutual Duties of Householders and Servants.
- LECTURE VIII.—Duties of Principals to Clerks and Apprentices.
- LECTURE IX.—Duties of Young Men to their Employers.
- LECTURE X.—The Use and Abuse of Amusements.
- LECTURE XI.—The Family Library.
- LECTURE XII.—The Self governed Man.

The classical elegance and simplicity of the style, and the warmth and naturalness of the eloquence of these Lectures, justify the great favor with which they were delivered, and mark the present volume as a valuable and popular contribution to our literature.

“The times demand just such a work as is here produced for the family, shedding a hallowed light on home, promoting discipline, inspiring affection, fostering the social virtues, and preparing for a steady, strong, and salutary influence in all the varied walks of society. We think of no man better qualified for the great and responsible task than Dr. Hague.”—*Christian Chronicle*.

“To many of our citizens the Rev. William Hague is too well known to require at our hands any recommendation of whatever issues from his pen. But we cannot forbear calling the attention of those less acquainted with his peculiar merits as a writer, to an admirable book called ‘Human Life,’ which bears his name as author, recently published in New York.”—*Boston Transcript*.

“These Lectures are an honor to the Christian literature of our country. They are written in a style of great beauty, abound in striking thoughts, are eminently practical in their bearing, and are fitted to guard the best interests of the young, and to give increased intensity and elevation to the joys of the Christian home.”—*Albany Argus*.

JAMES S. DICKERSON,

PUBLISHER, NEW YORK.

HARRY'S VACATION.

BY

W. C. RICHARDS, A.M.,

Editor of the Schoolfellow Magazine.

One Volume, Cloth, Illustrated. Price, \$1.00.

Third Edition.

"The design of this book is excellent, and it has been executed with much skill. It seeks to give information on scientific subjects and the philosophy of things, by means of a story which is artfully constructed and pleasantly related. As a gift book for the young people, it will be very profitable, as well as amusing."—*N. Y. Observer*.

"'Harry's Vacation' is a standard book for holidays, and for all times. Its moral is pure and high, and it is filled with curious and interesting information, from which the old as well as the young may derive profit and pleasure."—*Evening Mirror*.

"Foremost amongst them is 'Harry's Vacation,' by W. C. Richards, A.M. We like it. It is one of the old-fashioned sort of story-books, whose aim is to combine instruction with amusement. A couple of schoolboys spend their holidays in the country at the house of Dr. Sinclair, the father of one of them, and pass their time agreeably enough in listening to the old gentleman's illustrations of his favorite science, Chemistry. He does not lecture prosily and learnedly like a Professor; but contrives to interest the young folks by the discussion of some off hand topic, such as the frost on the window-panes, or the dropping of a plate from the hand of a careless servant. We are not in favor of cramming the child-mind with much learned lore; but we can readily commend this affair of Harry's; it is so pleasantly written, and with such a home-like thread of story running through it."—*Albion*.

JAMES S. DICKERSON,

PUBLISHER, NEW YORK.

THE
GENIUS OF ITALY,
OR
FACT AND POETRY
OF
Italian Life, Literature, and Religion.

BY ROBERT TURNBULL, D.D.,

Author of "Genius of Scotland," "Christ in History," &c., &c.

FOURTH REVISED AND ILLUSTRATED EDITION,
With an Appendix,
CONTAINING
SKETCHES OF MAZZINI, GAVAZZI,
AND OTHER CELEBRATED ITALIANS.

Price, \$1.00. Gilt, \$1.25.

"Dr. Turnbull gives us the orange groves, and the fountains, and the gondolas, and the frescoes, and the ruins, with touches of personal adventure and sketches of biography, and glimpses of the life, literature, and religion of modern Italy, seen with the quick, comprehensive glances of an American traveller, impulsive, inquisitive, and enthusiastic."—*Literary World*.

"At a moment when Italy is about to be regenerated, when the long-standing spirit of the people is about assuming its ancient vigor, a work of this kind is desirable. The country, its people, and its prominent features, are given with much truth and force."—*Democratic Review*.

"The title of this book hardly does justice to its rich and varied contents. It gives genial sketches of the literature and literary men of Italy, past and present, taking up city after city, describing each place in order, and then noticing both its political and literary history. It contains, moreover, an account of Pius IX., with two very judicious chapters upon the present condition and prospects of the Papacy, and of Italian liberty. It is not only a very pleasant book, but a useful and instructive one."—*Methodist Quarterly Review*.

JAMES S. DICKERSON,

PUBLISHER, NEW YORK.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 117 858 5

